

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 4-6, 10-12 and 15-18 are presently active in this case, Claims 1-3, 7-9 and 13-14 canceled, and Claims 4 and 10-12 amended by way of the present amendment.

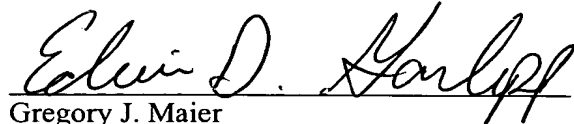
In the outstanding Official Action, the specification was objected to for minor informalities; the claims were objected to for minor informalities; Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,061,389 to Ishifuji et al.; Claims 1-3, 7-9 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishifuji et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,594,735 to Jokura; Claims 4-6 and 10-12 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims; and Claims 15-18 were allowed.

First, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for allowance of Claims 15-18 and indication that Claims 4-6 and 10-12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In order to expedite issuance of a patent in this case, Claim 4 has now been amended to include the limitations of canceled base Claim 1 and Claims 10-12 have each been amended to include the limitations of canceled base Claim 7. Thus, Claim 4, and Claims 5-6 which depend therefrom, are in condition for allowance. Moreover, Claims 10, 11, and 12 are each in condition for allowance.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable actions is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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